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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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AMHS cancels one Ketchikan to Prince Rupert, return sailing on Taku

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – The Alaska Marine Highway System today announced the cancellation of two sailings aboard the vessel Taku, north and southbound, between Skagway and Prince Rupert, British Columbia (BC), Canada.

The Taku will make all scheduled stops between Skagway and Ketchikan but will not carry passengers or vehicles between Ketchikan and Prince Rupert tomorrow and back to Ketchikan Sunday, March 30.

“We received notification yesterday from Prince Rupert city officials that they closed their city-owned ferry docking facility,” said Dennis Hardy, Deputy Commissioner of Marine Operations for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT & PF).

Prince Rupert officials closed its facility after an engineer’s report concluded that its dock poses an unacceptable level of safety risk.

“We had safety concerns, so we repeatedly asked city officials for a thorough engineers’ report,” Hardy said.

AMHS officials will determine the feasibility of mooring its ferries at the BC Ferries dock adjacent to the Prince Rupert dock. Officials with BC Ferries authorized AMHS to use its dock.

“The plan calls for mooring the Matanuska at the BC Ferries location at 3 a.m. Sunday,” said Hardy. “We want to know with 100 percent certainty that our vessels can dock their safely. We’re sending a professional engineer and a shore side maintenance supervisor to analyze the situation and determine if our ships can moor there safely and lessen any impacts on scheduling.”

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After learning of the situation and its potential effects to the AMHS movement of people and goods, DOT & PF Commissioner Leo von Scheben expressed his commitment to providing safe travel aboard AMHS ferries.

“Nothing can ever interfere with the safety of the passengers and crew who trust us to ensure that they safely reach their destinations aboard Alaska’s ferries,” von Scheben emphasized.

Late this afternoon, AMHS officials received assurance from Prince Rupert Mayor Herb Pond stating that his city would fully fund and complete the necessary repairs and upgrades for safe usage by May 26.

“The mayor’s assurance that the facility will be fixed and safely functional is very promising to us, and we hope this cooperation helps us maintain a solid business partnership with Prince Rupert and Mayor Pond,” said von Scheben.

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